

Message Text

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S/S-O:JETHYDEN
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TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA NIACT IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY CARACAS NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LIMA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MEXICO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PANAMA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY QUITO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OAS, SHUM, UY

SUBJECT: URUGUAY'S INVITATION TO HOLD OASGA IN MONTEVIDEO
GOING TO A VOTE

REF: STATE 005850

1. SUMMARY: IN SPITE OF BEST EFFORTS OF US AND OTHER PRO-HUMAN RIGHTS DELEGATIONS IN THE OAS, THE GOU HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO BRING ITS INVITATION TO A VOTE WITHOUT TAKING ANY SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARD RESOLVING ITS CONFLICT WITH THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. ON JANUARY 26, THE GENERAL COMMITTEE WILL DEBATE URUGUAY'S OFFER AND PROCEED TO A VOTE, BY SIMPLE MAJORITY, TO REFER ISSUE TO PERMANENT COUNCIL, WHERE TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY IS REQUIRED. UNLESS URUGUAY REQUESTS A LAST MINUTE POSTPONEMENT, VOTE JANUARY 26 WILL REVEAL WHETHER COUNTRIES DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH INSTITUTIONAL ISSUE OF ROLE OF IAHC IN OAS ARE ENOUGH TO DENY TWO-THIRDS NEEDED IN SUBSEQUENT PERMANENT COUNCIL VOTE ON GA SITE. WE BELIEVE MOMENT HAS COME FOR SUPPORTERS OF IAHC TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED. USG DEPLORES POLARIZATION OF OAS WHICH VOTE WILL EVIDENCE BUT BELIEVES FIRMLY THAT GOU'S INTRANSIGENT

STAND TOWARD IAHC MUST NOT BE REWARDED. WE BELIEVE NINE VOTES REQUIRED ARE AVAILABLE BUT REQUEST YOU MAKE APPROACH TO ACTION ADDRESSEES TO RECONFIRM AND ASSURE LARGEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF VOTES ARE CAST IN CONTRA IN HOPES INVITATION WILL BE WITHDRAWN BEFORE PERMANENT COUNCIL SESSION. END SUMMARY.
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2. AS OUTLINED IN REFTTEL, US DELEGATION TO OAS HAS CONTINUED INFORMAL DIALOGUE WITH URUGUAYAN AMBASSADOR ROCA IN EFFORT TO RE-ESTABLISH A CONSTRUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE IAHC THAT WOULD PERMIT ON-SITE INVESTIGATIVE VISIT TO URUGUAY IN 1978. WE MADE CLEAR TO AMBASSADOR ROCA THAT USG DID NOT CONSIDER THIS A BILATERAL ISSUE BUT ONE AFFECTING THE FUTURE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM IN WHICH ALL MEMBER STATES ARE VITALLY INTERESTED. OUR OVERRIDING INTEREST, AND THAT OF MANY OTHER DELEGATIONS, IS THAT INTEGRITY OF IAHC BE DEFENDED. OUR PRIMARY CONCERN IS WITH EVIDENCE OF GOU RESPECT FOR THE IAHC AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE OAS. HE RAISED IDEA OF HIGH-LEVEL OAS COMMITTEE, INCLUDING A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE IAHC, WHO WOULD VISIT URUGUAY TO DISCUSS "STEPS AND ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH A CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE IAHC." WE STRESSED THAT SUCH A COMMISSION WOULD BE AN INTERMEDIARY STEP IN A POLITICAL PROCESS THAT WOULD END IN AN IAHC VISIT TO URUGUAY. HE DID NOT REJECT OUR INTERPRETATION.

3. IN MONTEVIDEO, MEANWHILE, HIGH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS OF THE GOU HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH OUR AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS WAYS OF AVOIDING A CONFRONTATION IN THE OAS. IN COURSE OF LENGTHY CONVERSATIONS OVER LAST TEN DAYS, GOU REPS SKETCHED OUT THREE POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR RESOLVING IMPASSE: 1) WITHDRAW OFFER; 2) SHELVE INVITATION INDEFINITELY, AND 3) SEND HIGH-LEVEL GOU COMMITTEE HERE TO MEET WITH IAHC DIRECTLY TO ESTABLISH NEW RELATIONSHIP LEADING TO IAHC VISIT IN 1978. OUR AMBASSADOR ENCOURAGED GOU LEADERS TO STUDY THIRD OPTION, WHICH WOULD PLACE GOU IN DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE IAHC AND CONSTITUTE PUBLIC EVIDENCE OF WILLINGNESS TO RESUME NORMAL RELATIONS. WE AGREED TO DEFER AN ANSWER TO PRESIDENT MENDEZ' LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, SEEKING USG CONFIDENTIAL

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SUPPORT FOR GOU'S INVITATION, UNTIL GOU HAD COMPLETED STUDY OF THIRD OPTION.

4. ON JANUARY 24, AMBASSADOR MCGEE AND FRANK MCNEIL HELD A THREE-HOUR CONVERSATION WITH THE SENIOR URUGUAYAN MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC OFFICIALS RESIDENT IN WASHINGTON. DISCUSSIONS WERE INCONCLUSIVE. AD REFERENDUM, GOU OFFICIALS BROACHED IDEA OF IAHC ADVISORY MISSION COMING TO URUGUAY WITH NARROW TERMS OF REFERENCE, E.G. RECOMMEND CHANGES IN PROCEDURES THAT WOULD IMPROVE GOU'S HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE. AMBASSADOR MCGEE SAID ONLY DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN GOU AND IAHC COULD LEAD TO MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF IMPASSE OVER VISIT AND THAT SUCH A PROCESS, NECESSARILY OF SOME DURATION, WOULD REQUIRE POSTPONEMENT OF VOTE SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 26. SINCE INITIATIVE FOR SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WITH IAHC WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM URUGUAY--AS INDEED URUGUAY'S INVITATION TO OAS HAD BEGUN INSTITUTIONAL CONTROVERSY--URUGUAYAN DELEGATION SHOULD SEEK NEW POSTPONEMENT OF GENERAL COMMITTEE DEBATE. GOU REPS PROMISED TO ADVISE US IF URUGUAY INTENDED TO SEEK POSTPONEMENT.

5. AS OF NOW, URUGUAYANS ARE PROCEEDING AS IF THEY WILL BRING MATTER TO VOTE ON JANUARY 26. WE BELIEVE WE HAVE MADE GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO BREAK THROUGH BARRIER OF PAST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOU AND IAHC AND TO RESOLVE INSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN THE OAS. SOME STATES WITH DEEP COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS HEMISPHERE ARE UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO HOLDING GA IN MONTEVIDEO. OTHERS ARE PROFOUNDLY DISTURBED BY INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND ARE PREPARED TO ABSTAIN IN VOTE. MOST WERE HOPEFUL OF SEEING EVIDENCE OF SHIFT IN GOU'S POSITION THAT WOULD ALLOW A SUCCESSFUL GA TO TAKE PLACE IN MONTEVIDEO. CONFIDENTIAL

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WORKING CLOSELY WITH DELEGATIONS OF ALL THESE STATES, USG SOUGHT TO FIND A WAY OUT OF DILEMMA POSED BY URUGUAY'S INVITATION.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE KNOW THAT GOVERNMENTS OF MOST ACTION ADDRESSEES SHARE OUR PROFOUND CONCERN WITH IMPLICATIONS OF URUGUAY'S OFFER FOR FUTURE OF OUR REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS. MANY OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH US IN EFFORT TO HEAD OFF UNFORTUNATE CONFRONTATION IN THE OAS BUT WE BELIEVE ACCEPTING MONTEVIDEO AS A GA SITE, IN ABSENCE OF POSITIVE EVIDENCE OF GOU'S COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH IAHC, WOULD BE EVEN MORE UNFORTUNATE. THEREFORE, WE ASK AMBASSADOR OR CHARGE AT EACH ACTION POST APPROACH FOREIGN OFFICE AT HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL TO RESTATE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN REFTTEL, OFFER DETAILS OF LATER INFORMAL NEGOTIATIONS, MAKE POINT THAT NINE VOTES REQUIRED ARE ASSURED, AND SEEK COMMITMENT

OF HOST GOVERNMENT TO VOTE "NO" OR ABSTAIN IF MATTER COMES TO VOTE ON JANUARY 26. NINE VOTES REQUIRED TO BLOCK URUGUAY'S OFFER ARE ASSURED IN PERMANENT COUNCIL BUT WE BELIEVE LARGEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF CONTRARY VOTES IN GENERAL COMMITTEE (WHOSE SESSIONS ARE PRIVATE) WILL DISSUADE GOU FROM PRESSING INVITATION FURTHER AND AVOID PUBLIC SHOWDOWN THAT WILL POLARIZE OAS AND EMBARRASS URUGUAY. WE WOULD HAVE MUCH PREFERRED TO AVOID VOTE AT THIS JUNCTURE WHILE URUGUAY EXPLORED POSSIBILITY OF NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IAHC BUT GOU EVIDENTLY PREFERS TO BRING ISSUE TO FORMAL RESOLUTION NOW. REQUEST DEMARCHES BE MADE SOONEST TO ASSURE INSTRUCTIONS REACH DELEGATIONS PRIOR TO MID-MORNING SESSION TOMORROW.

7. FOR TEGUCIGALPA: REQUEST YOU MAKE NEW APPEAL TO CALLEJAS TO AMEND AMBASSADOR LAZARUS' INSTRUCTIONS TO ABSTAIN IN GENERAL COMMITTEE VOTE ON GROUNDS DEFENSE OF IAHC IS FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTIONAL ISSUE AS DISCUSSED IN CONFIDENTIAL

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TEGUCIGALPA 0179.

8. FOR PORT OF SPAIN: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO'S VOTE IS BEING COUNTED FAVORABLY BY BOTH SIDES AND AMBASSADOR MCINTYRE INFORMS VENEZUELAN HE WILL ABSTAIN, LACKING INSTRUCTIONS. ABSTENTION BY T/T DELEGATION WOULD BE STRONG SIGNAL OF SUPPORT FOR IAHC.

9. FOR PORT AU PRINCE: YOUR CABLE 4723 SUGGESTS GOU WOULD BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO FORCEFUL DEMARCHE IN ORDER TO RECOUP LOSSES OF NERRE AFFAIR. WE WILL MAKE PARALLEL APPROACH TO AMBASSADOR SALOMON BUT WORD FROM FOREIGN OFFICE WOULD MAKE HAITIAN ABSTENTION CERTAIN.

10. FOR QUITO: YOUR CABLE 0252 INDICATED VENTIMILLA WAS OPEN TO IDEA THAT URUGUAY SHOULD INVITE IAHRG IN ORDER TO MAKE MONTEVIDEO SUCCESSFUL GA SITE. PLEASE STRESS TO HIM GOU'S UNWILLINGNESS TO YIELD ON VISIT AS ARGUMENT FOR ABSTENTION BY GOE.

11. FOR LA PAZ: YOUR CABLE 0266 INDICATES TERCEROS WOULD SEEK GOB POSITION OF NO DECISION PENDING EFFORT TO ELICIT INVITATION TO IAHRG FROM GOU. IN LIGHT OF GOU'S REFUSAL TO ENTER INTO MORE CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP, MUCH LESS INVITE IAHRG TO VISIT, WE HOPE GOU WILL CONSIDER ABSTAINING IN JANUARY 26 VOTE. VANCE

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